

VZCZCXRO2508
PP RUEHAST
DE RUEHSL #0817/01 2791448
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 061448Z OCT 06
FM AMEMBASSY BRATISLAVA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0353
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 0014

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 BRATISLAVA 000817

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [ELAB](#) [KDEM](#) [PINR](#) [AF](#) [RO](#) [BU](#)
LO
SUBJECT: SLOVAKIA POLITICAL ROUND UP OCTOBER 6, 2006

REF: A. BRATISLAVA 733

[1](#)B. BRATISLAVA 754
[1](#)C. BRATISLAVA 764
[1](#)D. BRATISLAVA 719

BRATISLAVA 00000817 001.2 OF 002

NEW NATIONAL COORDINATOR FOR TIP NAMED

[1](#)1. (SBU) The new National Coordinator to Combat Trafficking in Persons will be Jozef Bucek, the new State Secretary at the Ministry of Interior. This effectively raises the political clout of the National Coordinator position by several notches. Bucek, a Smer party member from Kosice, does not have a background in TIP issues but reportedly will start meeting with experts later this month. Several experienced TIP stakeholders note that Bucek has a large task to get back the lost momentum on TIP efforts that occurred while the National Coordinator post sat vacant for two months. (BIO NOTE: Bucek is a long-time Embassy contact with a positive view of the U.S. He has two teenage daughters. He has never been to the U.S. - the closest he has gotten is Canada - mostly due to his extreme fear of flying. The DCM will pay his courtesy call on Bucek next week. END NOTE.)

NITRA ATTACK - THE TRUTH MAY LIE IN THE MIDDLE

[1](#)2. (SBU) A contact with ties to the Ministry of the Interior informed Emboff that the alleged skinhead attack on an ethnic-Hungarian university student in Nitra in August might have happened after all (refs A-C). The young woman may have received a light beating but then tried to make her injuries appear worse than they actually were because she believed that a few punches were "not enough" to make her case to the police, the source explained.

AFGHANIS IN SLOVAKIA

[1](#)3. (SBU) Poloffs met with Slovak human rights expert Zuzana Fialova who worked in northeast Afghanistan for several years on community development, education, and human rights issues, first as part of a German PRT and then on an independent contract. She received a grant from SlovakAid to bring three diverse groups of Afghans to Slovakia on study tours to share Slovakia's experience with political and economic transformation. Fialova pointed out that foreign experts can lecture endlessly about democracy but there is nothing akin to seeing with one's own eyes. Fialova added Afghanistan's transformation will take many years and Americans should not lose patience. (COMMENT. This is yet another example of the way a small country like Slovakia is contributing to broader

goals of "transformational diplomacy." END COMMENT.)

HOW TO IMPROVE SLOVAK AID?

14. (SBU) Fialova was critical of the way SlovakAid sets development priorities and issues grants. Currently the small amount of aid Slovakia has to offer is spread too thinly and does not bring enough positive publicity to the country. "What good does it do to build one school in Afghanistan? The Germans built 300 and the Slovak contribution is invisible." She would like to see the MFA do more strategic planning, focus on the strongest skills of its NGOs (such as sharing Slovakia's transformation expertise and developing civil society), and concentrate diplomatic efforts and development aid in a few key countries. She criticized the fact that Slovakia does not have an embassy in Afghanistan, despite its military presence and assistance program, which makes it much harder to coordinate the military and development aid. (COMMENT. This situation also complicated the donation of excess military equipment from Slovakia to Afghanistan last year, which could only be arranged with extraordinary U.S. efforts. END COMMENT.)

15. (SBU) Currently the MFA's SlovakAid office plans its program budget, and the UNDP office in Slovakia and NPOA, a Slovak NGO contracted by the MFA, administer the grants. On September 28 the Cabinet approved the concept for Slovakia to develop an aid agency. In his October 5 courtesy call with new MFA State Secretary (Deputy Minister) Olga Algayerova (who is responsible for SlovakAid and development issues generally), the DCM offered U.S. expertise in managing development assistance. Algayerova said she would greatly welcome our suggestions. We will work to identify and match decision-makers in Slovakia with U.S. experts who can positively influence this project during the coming months.

SLOVAK LABOR MARKET TO OPEN TO ROMANIANS AND BULGARIANS

BRATISLAVA 00000817 002.2 OF 002

16. (U) According to media reports, Slovakia intends to open its labor market to Romanians and Bulgarians from the first day of their entry into the EU. Slovaks felt as though they were discriminated against in the labor market by members of "old Europe" upon their EU accession and don't want to do the same to the newcomers. At least one commentator predicts little impact by the opening of the labor market because, with a minimum wage of USD 253 (7600 SKK) per month, wages are already quite low even for Slovaks.

HOW DRY IS THE MFA?

17. (SBU) An official at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims that one of FM Kubis's first acts upon taking the reins of the ministry was to ban the practice of offering alcohol to guests. Our contact had mixed feelings about the new policy, on the one hand recognizing it as modern and professional, but on the other hand regretting that a traditional expression of Slovak hospitality has been forsaken. Apparently, the Russian Ambassador now brings his own bottle of vodka to the MFA and insists on being offered a shot from it whenever he visits.

VALLEE